

# Port plans to double Cox Creek dredge site by 2019

Posted: Wednesday, April 30, 2014 4:00 am | Updated: 8:50 am, Wed Apr 30, 2014.

## Port plans to double Cox Creek dredge site by 2019

By ZOË READ [zread@capgaznews.com](mailto:zread@capgaznews.com)

The Maryland Port Administration plans to double the size dredge containment site in Pasadena by 2019.

Expansion at the Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility is needed as the Port of Baltimore prepares to receive larger container

The estimated cost of the project is \$185 million for planning, construction, operating and maintaining over a 20-year period. The 117-acre site would be expanded by building high retaining walls called dikes next to the current facility.

“We need to move (sediment) out of the way and put it somewhere so our businesses and commerce and community is still thriving,” said Dave Blazer, deputy director of harbor development for the port administration.

The dikes at the Cox Creek site contain sediment dredged from the port and the navigational channels, some of which is classified as contaminated. The facility is located south of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, just off Fort Smallwood Road.

The port is currently in the planning stages, but has begun talking to the surrounding community to identify concerns, Blazer said.

The Masonville site in the Curtis Bay neighborhood of Baltimore also is being considered for the additional sediment, and the state has opened talks to buy Coke Point across the Patapsco River at Sparrows Point.

Planning will take about two years, construction will take another two years and the project should be complete in 2018 or 2019, Blazer said.

The MPA will work with the Maryland Environmental Service, the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Army Corps of Engineers and EA Engineering to conduct an environmental study of the proposed expansion.

The port has been using the site for seven years, after it was converted from use as a private industrial site in the 1990s. After the sediment is placed, excess water drains and it slowly settles into dry land.

The existing area has a capacity of 5 million cubic yards, according to the Maryland Environmental Service. As part of the facility, 11 acres of wetlands have been restored on Swan Creek, a small waterway that cuts through the area.

Blazer said the administration wants to ensure there will be no environmental issues associated with the project, such as chemical contaminants and conflict with wetlands.

“We can address most of these issues, but we have to do these additional studies, looking into the ground and surface to make sure there is no surprises that we have to deal with,” Blazer said.

“We’ve got to check and make sure the ground is solid and can take the load and bearings putting the material on top of it.”

Caryn Canfield, director of Restore Rock Creek in Pasadena, said the port administration is a good environmental steward, and that there’s a commercial need for dredging.

“I believe the port and activities at Cox Creek are in compliance with the law and that they are making an effort to be good environmental stewards of the land they control,” she said.

“We want Baltimore to be a thriving area and part of that is there needs to be jobs, and the port needs to be able to have ships get in there.”

There are no communities in close proximity to the planned expansion, Blazer said. Still, the MPA held one of a series of open houses to discuss the plans Saturday.

Area residents asked about how the property will be used, if there will be any truck traffic, if there are any environmental concerns and how high the dikes will be, Blazer said.

He said trucks will not be used for dredging and they don’t plan on building mountainous dikes.

The MPA also has go-between advisory committees, and it will continue to have public meetings and open houses to share information with public during the process.

“We want to be as transparent as we can ... and we want to address the issues,” Blazer said.